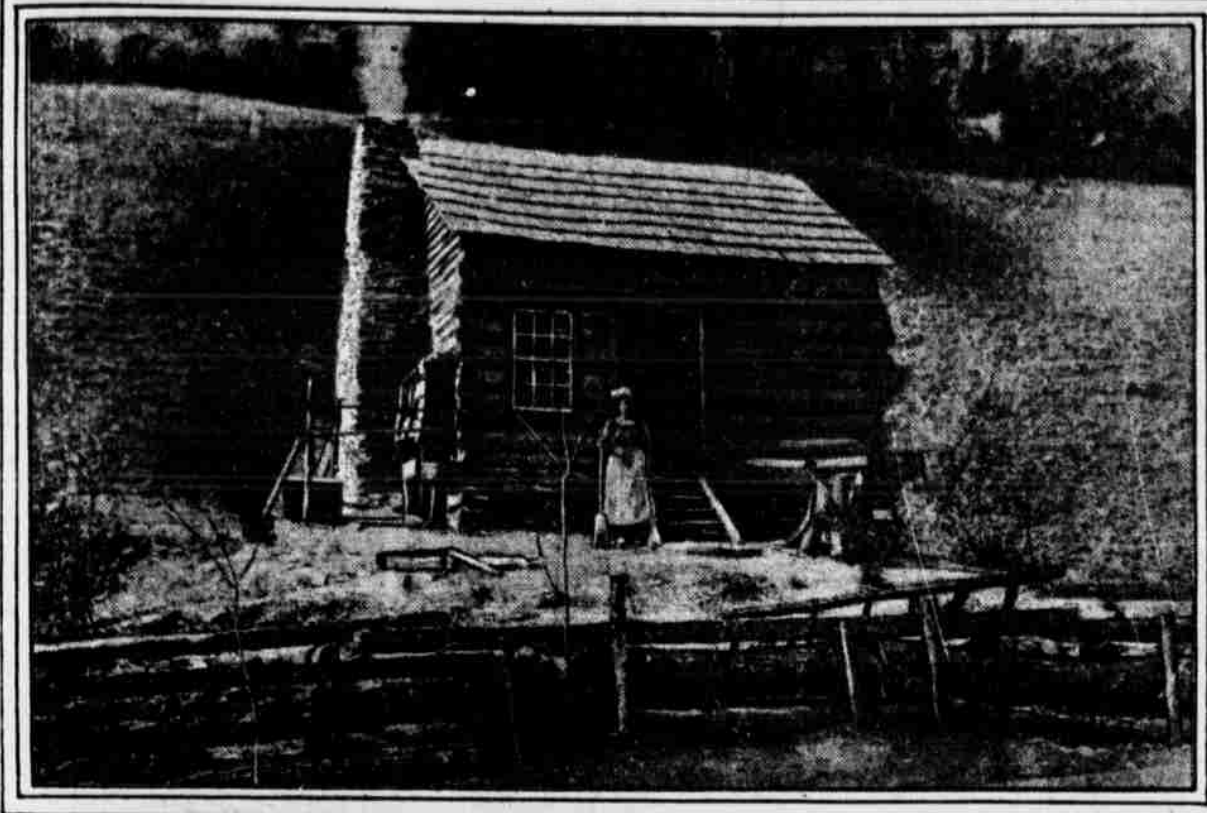


# On the Inside in the Heart of the Moonshine Country



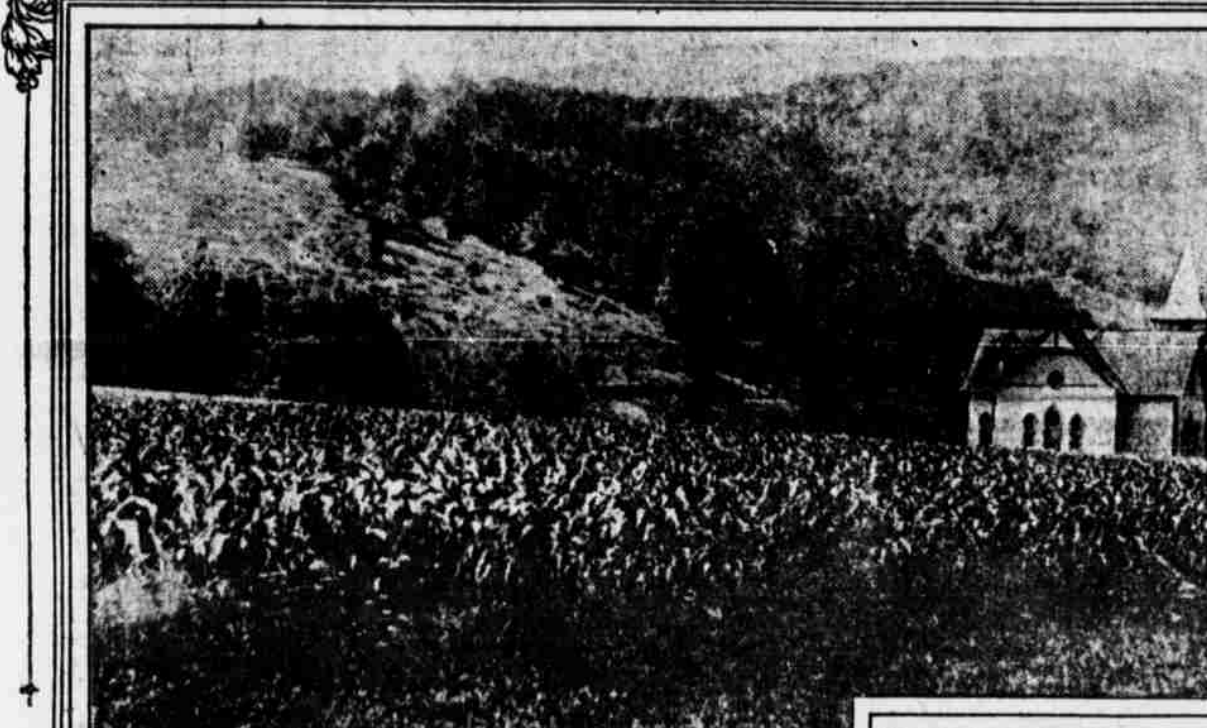
IRIA JOHNSON'S CABIN, SITTING ON PART OF HIS 200 ACRE FARM. BACK OF THE HOUSE IS THE PLOWED FIELD FOR CORN. IRIA HAS FOUR STILL, ALL WORKING, AND HE DOES NOT HAVE TO GO OFF HIS LAND TO BE BUSY. THE CABIN CLAY COUNTY.



JUDGE WHITE, FAMOUS IN THE BAKER-HOWARD-PHILLIPOT-HALL FEUD, PRESIDES IN LONDON AND MANCHESTER COURTS. HE HAS ELEVEN BULLETS IN HIS BODY BUT ENJOYS PERFECT HEALTH AT THE AGE OF 65.



UP RED BIRD RIVER JAKE LOVELL AND JOE STEPHENS HAVE A COMPLETE PLANT WITH A CAPACITY OF 25 GALLONS A DAY. THIS IS THE LARGEST STILL IN EASTERN KENTUCKY.



CORN GROWING NEXT TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS THE CROP OF A MOUNTAINEER AND ITS USE HAS ALWAYS BEEN FOR "MOUNTAIN DEW." THE OWNER IS A DEVOTED MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION.



JAKE LOVELL AND JOE STEPHEN AND THEIR TEN GALLON STILL, 33 MILES SOUTH OF LONDON, KY. LEFT TO RIGHT—LOVELL, STEPHEN AND THEIR ASSOCIATE, SAM RICHARDSON.

## How Desperate Men Foil Revenue Agents and Keep Illicit Industry Flourishing

By W. RUSSELL.

IN SPITE of the oft-repeated efforts of the United States Government to put an end to the illicit distillation of liquors in the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee, the traffic continues in full blast in many localities. In fact, in some quarters the volume of business done by the so-called moonshiners has materially increased, until their annual output totals enough to supply a surprising amount of population with an amazing volume of alcoholic stimulants.

The manufacture of moonshine whiskey by men, sometimes aided by women, in defiance of the laws of the United States has been carried on ever since the early days of the country, and to-day practically the same methods are employed as were followed fifty or more years ago. Generations of moonshiners have perfected systems of distillation that are treasured by their descendants, and grandsons and great-grandsons of old-time distillers of the law use to-day the same formulas and identical apparatus fashioned and originated by their forefathers.

"How is it," you ask, "that this practice, frowned on by the Government, yet survives, when the officials have unlimited sums of money to expend to wipe it out and when the supply of daring, resourceful revenue officers never runs short?"

The answer is that the moonshiners are for the most part desperate men, cool, nerve marksmen who shoot to kill at several hundred yards; that they have exercised great ingenuity in concealing their stills and that their friends, neighbors and associates are banded together with them to protect the illicit industry. High in the mountain fastnesses, low in the wooded valleys, behind rugged crags, in moss-banked glens in shadowy recesses accessible only through narrow trails, in retreats where lookouts can scan every approach—there work the moonshiners, there are their stills, and there lurk the keen-eyed watchers, finger on trigger, ready to greet the stranger or the "revenue man" with a leaden argument that permits of no answer.

**Strangers Under Suspicion.**

Many are the revenue men who have gone to their death in the purple hills of Kentucky and Tennessee; many more will go the same way in future. Many the strangers, resting under suspicion, who have never returned from ventures into the forbidden regions where the lawless still operators rule themselves and pass judgment on all folks from "the outside" with cold unfeeling, executing their verdicts with ruthless determination.

The centre of the moonshine country is in Kentucky, situated in Clay, Laurel, Leslie, Knox and Jackson counties. They are neighboring counties in the southeastern section of the State, removed but short distances from the Tennessee line. There are no less than twenty illicit stills in Clay county, the others averaging from ten to fifteen each.

The moonshine business is at its highest pitch now because of the large number of localities that have gone "dry" as the result of local option laws. By attempting to obliterate the liquor business the authorities have placed a premium on the output of the illegal stills. In the "dry" sections the penalty on conviction for violation of the liquor selling law is \$100 fine and thirty days imprisonment. The fine can be "worked out" by the offender going to jail. As he is allowed 50 cents a day he requires 200 days in which to work out the fine, and the additional thirty days make a total of



JAN JENSON'S STILL. IT IS AN UNDERGROUND STILL AND ITS CAPACITY IS MORE THAN 20 GALLONS PER DAY.

230 days for the offence. However, there are comparatively few convictions when one considers the number of men engaged in manufacturing moonshine and in selling it to consumers and retailers. These latter in some instances constitute a large proportion of the male inhabitants of a community. Known as "bootleggers" because they originally carried bottles of "M. S." (moonshine) in their bootlegs, they are thorough experts in distributing to customers undetected the product of the mountain stills.

**The Clans All Intermarry.**

In Clay county, home of the noted Kentucky feudists, where for years good marksmanship has been the only price of safety to members of warring families, the moonshine makers and their co-workers are more numerous than probably in any other section of the State. The members of six families, including their relatives by marriage, dominate the population of this county in numbers, and naturally there has sprung up a sort of Free Masonry among them that has worked to their

advantage in feud times as well as when moonshining operations were contemplated. These leading families are the Hakers, the Whites, the Little, the Phillpotts, the Howards and the Garretts. Intermarriage among members of the same families is a frequent occurrence in the Kentucky mountains. London, in Laurel county, is the nearest railroad point to the heart of the moonshine district in southern Kentucky. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad has a station here. To reach the centre of moonshine production from London one rides in a so-called "hot wagon" with no springs and having a canvas top like a prairie schooner of the days of the "forty-niners." Drawn by a team of mules one proceeds southeast into the mountains, a branch of the Blue Ridge range. The rocky roads, lined with woods, are frequently so steep that one has to walk alongside the wagon to relieve the mules of all possible weight. At the end of a tortuous eight hour trip from twenty to twenty-five miles have been covered and Manchester, in Clay county, is reached. A night's rest

prepares the traveller for a mule back journey into the heart of the mountains where the stills are located. The rough roads, precipitous and dotted with boulders, render impossible the covering of more than from six to fourteen miles a day. But when finally in the "M. S." zone the inquisitive person who desires to see a still is no closer to realizing his ambition than he would be if ensconced on an ice pack off northern Labrador unless he has the confidence of the men who make the "mountain dew." In other words, he must be vouched for by men who can guarantee that he is "all right," that he is an absolutely safe person to be taken on "the inside," the mysterious, darksome, ominous "inside," where the breath of suspicion will place the venturer beyond all hope of escape. It is impossible for an outsider to find the stills, cunningly concealed as they are. A man might stand within fifty feet of one, or even closer, and be totally unaware of its presence.

The natives who make Manchester their headquarters tell with relish the

story of two men who spent months in the moonshine territory without ever seeing a still in spite of their familiarity with various men busily engaged in the traffic of illicit whiskey.

### Coal Prospectors Blinded.

Jim Donnelly, son-in-law of C. O. Little, who defended Jim Howard in the celebrated Goebel case, was one, and an associate of his named Guttenberg was the other. They were prospecting for coal, and in all the time they were in the neighborhood of Manchester and travelling through remote portions of Clay county they never saw a single still. It may be observed here that there is a flourishing still, run by well known moonshiners, within nine miles of Manchester.

The severe scrutiny of every visitor to the moonshine region and the suspicion to which he is subjected are due to the experiences the still owners have had in the past with men purporting to have certain stated objects but who in reality were revenue men or Federal or State detectives travelling in search of evidence. As

## "Dry" Laws in Many Localities Serve to Boom Traffic in "Mountain Dew"

one seasoned moonshiner who comes to Manchester every few days puts it: "These 'ere fellers that come in tellin' us to how they air school teachers or ministers on a vacation, or that they air prospectin' fer coal lands, is very often revenue men, an' as far ez I c'n see him even, if he wears medals."

The old man's idea regarding unknown visitors is shared by all of the men affiliated with the trade in "M. S." and the casual pedestrian from the outside need not feel surprised by being stopped by a lean, lank mountaineer while exploring a picturesque trail or when journeying up a mountain side to get a view of the country. The native does not care about the destination or object of the stranger. He simply says: "You can't come through here. You'd better go back whar you come from."

Argument will but aggravate the situation. If the stranger insists on penetrating the forbidden section he may never be seen again, or he may be escorted roughly to a place of safety.

If he draws a gun and tries to force his way—well, he proves himself a very foolish person and one utterly unfamiliar with the summary methods of the moonshiner, who is placed on the defensive.

As a rule two men are required to operate a moonshine still, but more are often found doing the work, particularly when the proprietors of the unlawful distillery are members of the same family, father and sons or brothers.

The cost of erecting a still may be averaged as follows:

Thirty feet of copper pipe..... \$3.00  
Whiskey barrel..... 1.00  
Iron pot..... 6.00  
Three sugar barrels..... 45  
Tub that the coil runs into..... 50  
Total..... \$11.25

A pot of the price mentioned will hold enough corn mash to make four gallons of whiskey a day. Of course some of the stills produce more than this amount a day, while others produce only two gallons every twenty-four hours.

The iron pot in which the corn mash is placed for distillation purposes rests in a roughly improvised furnace made of stone, with a flue at the back. The corn mash is placed in the pot, a hot fire is started beneath it and the steam which arises goes through the copper coil which is connected at the top of the pot and is condensed into liquid. This liquid is called "singlings" or "the beer." It is a weak alcoholic fluid, and is put through the same process once more, when it comes out strong, real white moonshine whiskey, and the makers term it "doublets," because it has had double distillation. The average product of the Kentucky M. S. stills is 80 proof, but when more time is taken in the process whiskey of 100 and 110 proof is taken.

**The Profits Are Large.**

Each bushel of corn, valued at about 25 cents, yields about one gallon, one quart and one pint of whiskey.

The moonshiners raise their own corn to be used in making whiskey. While ostensibly they raise the grain for commercial and fodder purposes, only a small percentage of their crop ever is devoted toward these ends. They take the corn to mills to be ground, presumably for corn bread, &c., but for every nine bushels ground in the mills of Kentucky it is estimated that only about three bushels are used for any purpose other than the making of stimulating mountain dew. The cornmeal is put into a barrel partly filled with water. For every bushel of meal used a peck of whole grain corn, which has been wet and sprouted by exposure to the sun, is put in and mashed and stirred in with the meal. Thus is the mash prepared that is used in the still.

The moonshiners require running water as a rule close to their still as means of cooling the copper coil, the "worm," in which the vapor from the mash is condensed. They divert water from a brook or spring and run it through a trough or hollowed log to the coil. The moonshiners have no

Continued on Ninth Page.